There are many elaborately sculptured stone fronted houses in Rouen, which should afford hints to architectural travellers, and no new work is to be seen either here or in other French towns, without at all events an attempt at decoration. The country houses around display considerable variety in the arrangement of the roofs, disposition of adjunctive buildings, and in the dressings of doors and windows. While the English visitor notes the taste and ingenuity thus displayed, he will not fail also to observe a slovenliness, want of finish, and inattention to drainage, paving, and the condition of the streets, which are quite surprising, and which must tend to neutralize, in a sanitary point of view, the advantage the people have in their public promenades, and numerous open *places* for ventilation and exercise. No English community, however small, would suffer their streets to remain in the filthy condition in which those of such important towns as Rouen and Havre are.

At the last-named place, Havre, a building of considerable pretensions has been lately erected for the purposes of a public museum and library, from the designs of M. Debene, the architect to the town previous to the revolution. It is a square building, about 100 feet in front, and about 120 feet in depth; Italian in design, and wholly of Caen stone, from Messrs. Luard and Beedham's quarries. It is in two stories, Ionic and Corinthian, with columns at intervals, and has a central third story for a clock. Stone figures of Painting, History, Science, and Sculpture, surmount the balustrade of the front on either side of the clock-story already mentioned.

The internal arrangement of the building is exceedingly meritorious. It consists of a central hall (appropriated to sculpture), divided into three parts by two ranges of four columns, supporting an enriched panelled ceiling. On either side of this hall, and separated from it by an open arcade, by means of which the hall is lighted, is a gallery used as a museum, the floor of which is 6 or 8 feet above the floor of the hall, so as to afford rooms for the attendants, &c. beneath. Access to these galleries is had from the hall by a flight of steps on each side of the entrance in front. A long flight of steps from the centre of the back of the hall, with other flights right and left, conduct to a spacious picture-gallery over the hall, and a library, containing 22,000 volumes, over the side galleries.

The collection of pictures is large, and contains some good works; many of them, we were informed, belong to an Irish gentleman resident in Paris, and are lent to the town for a certain number of years. The cost of the building, exclusive of fittings, was, according to the attendant, 40,000*l*.

Various works are going on in the repair of the quays and docks, and in the erection of some large warehouses and depôts, which will afford us illustrations when we come to speak of the stone of Caen and its neighbourhood.

Our readers have so recently had a notice of the principal buildings in Caen from the pen of Mr. Donaldson,* that we must be careful to avoid repetition. These structures are unquestionably of the greatest interest and value, and should be visited by all who are studying the history of architecture. The two large churches built by William the Conqueror and Queen Matilda are especially important, in consequence of the certainty of our knowledge in respect of the date of their erection. They are incontrovertible records of the state of architecture in Normandy towards the close of the eleventh century, and serve satisfactorily to disprove the statement made by French antiquaries, that pointed architecture, *as a style*, was practised in Normandy in that same century.

We visited Caen eight or nine years ago, and laid before the Society of Antiquaries some notes and sketches illustrative of the state and appearance of the buildings examined, in the shape of a series of letters to Sir Henry Ellis. Referring to these,* we find it mentioned that various repairs had been going on at Matilda's Church, dedicated to the Trinity, but were suspended in consequence of the want of money. It is to be hoped, we remarked, that efforts will be made not merely to complete the necessary re-instatements, but to remove an absurd balustrade, cornice, and consoles, of modern French taste, which at this time disfigure the upper part of the two western towers. They present the same want of propriety and accordance with the remainder of the composition, as would a modern cap and ribbons on the head of a skin-clad aboriginal.

Suspended, however, the works still are: the doorways (restored) are boarded up, and the westernmost part of the nave is divided off from the part of the church which is in use. The interior of this building possesses an elegance and grace peculiarly its own, and which appear really marvellous, when the ponderous nature of the style is duly considered. The original semi-circular absis that remains is exceedingly interesting, and, as well as all the details, will amply pay for a careful examination: some of the capitals of the columns in the clerestory are peculiarly Byzantine in character. A crypt beneath the absis (delineated in Pugin's "Normandy"), contains sixteen columns unattached, besides others against the walls, disposed so as to divide it into five aisles. The columns, about 4 feet 6 inches apart, are 11 inches in diameter and about 8 feet 6 inches in height, including the cap and base; the cap itself is about 1 foot 9 inches high. These columns have a very Roman appearance.

The old part of the west front of the church is much rent by the failure of the foundation; indeed, there is scarcely a building in Caen of any size which is without a settlement, from the same cause. The stone used is, nevertheless, in a singularly good state, and appears to be of the same formation as that of the quarries now in use. Why this should endure so well, while much from the present quarries has decayed in a few years, we may probably see as we advance in the inquiry.†

At *St. Etienne*, the Conqueror's Church, the morning chapel, at the west end of the north aisle, is being restored, under M. Guy, architect. The new masonry would not satisfy a London practitioner. The interior of the church appears to have been scraped, and is in an exceedingly good condition.

The interior of this church is remarkable for an effect of severe dignity that is truly beautiful,—amply compensating thereby for the lack of ornament which is apparent. In the nave and transept, the semi-circular arch everywhere obtains: in the choir, which is later in style, the *pointed* arch prevails, and tends somewhat to disturb the harmony that elsewhere reigns throughout. Documentary evidence seems to shew, that this latter portion of the church, namely the choir, was erected in the fourteenth century: reasoning from analogy, one would not give to it so late a date by at least a hundred years. The twisted cable and chevron or zig-zag moulding, are observable in all parts of it; and in the triforium are seen semi-circular arches, inclosing pairs of pointed-headed openings. The triforium around the whole of the building, it may be mentioned incidentally, is exceedingly spacious, and would afford accommodation, as was its original purpose, for a great number of persons. It is covered with a simple vaulting, rather more than a quarter of a circle in span, strengthened by plain horizontal bands at certain distances. On the groined roof of the transept are some slight remains of ornamental painting of red colour.

At the west end of the nave, an organ on a mongrel screen of Roman-Doric columns, bearing arches, has been introduced. This mode of disfiguring the productions of the artists of the middle ages, and thus of displaying contempt of them, which was so common in England until within the last fifty years, was not confined, unfortunately, to any one country. Happily such a different spirit now prevails with regard to the works of our forefathers, both here and in France,—a knowledge of architectural history, and feeling for architectural consistency (although still sadly limited), are so much more general than they were,—that no person would now think of attempting so gross a violation of taste and propriety; still less would such an outrage be quietly permitted by the public at large.

Externally much of the stone of the Norman portion, now nearly 800 years old, is in good condition. There are, as usual, settlements. The joints of the old masonry are very large (an inch, and in some places an inch and a-half, in thickness), quite as rude as any of those portions of Gloucester Cathedral, Worcester Cathedral, &c., which some ascribe to the Saxons. St. Etienne, it is to be regretted, is more enclosed by buildings than it was when we were there before.

The church of St. Nicholas, near the last-mentioned edifice, is a very perfect relic of Norman skill. The stones of which the church is built are about 12 inches by 10 inches, and the sand used for the mortar was unsifted, so that the joints are large. St. Nicholas has three absides,—one at the east end of the choir, and one at the east side of both north and south transept. It is to be regretted that this interesting building, which has perhaps suffered less change, and is more homogeneous than any other edifice in Caen of the same date (11th century), is still used for most unworthy purposes: it is divided by a wooden floor into two stories, of which the lowermost is occupied as stables, and the other as a granary. It may be remarked, that a resemblance, in several respects, to the architecture of the lower Greek Empire, may be traced in this edifice — a circumstance not wholly unimportant in the investigation of the history of the architecture of the middle ages.

With a few additional observations on the buildings of Caen, we shall next week lead our readers into the quarries, and place before them such practical information concerning the stone as we have with some pains gathered.

Lanercost Abbey is to be repaired by the Woods and Forests. The local papers state that the works will be commenced immediately, and that Mr. Salvin is the architect employed.

* See p. 32, *ante*.

* "Ancient Architectural Remains in Lower Normandy." By George Godwin, Architect, F.R.S.

† The church of the Trinity, and most of the other churches in Caen, stand nearly east and west. St. Pierre, celebrated for its beautiful spire and tower, stands north and south.

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